# JPSE: Winning war of ideas with truth

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The Global War on Terror has many faces. Some cloaked in secrecy – shadowy figures who plot murder. Others are plastered on newspapers and websites spreading disinformation and fueling hatred and anger.

"Because they cannot engage us in conventional warfare, they will try to engage us in a war of ideas and perceptions," said Gen. Doug Brown, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command. "Through Psychological and Information Operations we can provide a powerful voice to enable the oppressed or misinformed populations to hear the truth."

Psychological Operations disseminate truthful information to foreign audiences through all communications mediums. U.S. Army PSYOP units are a force multiplier to commanders in Afghanistan and Iraq, but they use words instead of bullets.

But these areas are only two fronts in the Global War on Terror.

To assist in coordinating the complete Psychological Operations GWOT effort, an organization was needed that would be able to support all geographic combatant commands in this important facet of the war.

"The key is Gen. Brown wanted to build an organization that would allow him to send experienced people to assist combatant commanders in completing their mission," said Col. James Treadwell, Joint Psychological Operations Support Element director.

Stood up in 2003, the JPSE at Special Operations Command Headquarters at MacDill AFB, Fla., fits Brown's vision.

The JPSE is a unique organization designed as a unit – not a staff agency – created in response to the Fiscal Year 2004 Defense Planning Guidance to establish a unit to support command and Department of Defense PSYOP missions. At its core, it's staffed by more than 50 senior military and civilians with a deep knowledge of Psychological Operations. The organization could grow to around 100 when and if completely filled.

At first glance, the JPSE might seem like a duplication of effort with the 4th PSYOP Group based at Ft. Bragg., N.C., but Treadwell assures this is not the case.

"The 4th Group provides the forces – the people on the ground to carry out the mission," he said. "The JPSE provides support directly to the combatant commanders and their staffs. In the past, any request for PSYOP personnel had to go through four levels of command. Now we can provide support, in either small teams or virtually, right from the USSOCOM headquarters, allowing the leaders in our PSYOP battalions and companies to maintain focus on their individual units."

The objective of the JPSE is to meet the global PSYOP objectives with regionally and functionally focused staff experts capable of global planning, analysis and commercial quality prototype product development. Recently, the JPSE has contracted with civilian media agencies to enhance its capabilities. While the military has multimedia savvy and creative people, Treadwell is the first to admit the military doesn't hold the monopoly on creative talent.

"We have been asked many times 'why don't you leverage the civilian sector for this type of work' and I agree," he said. "While we have professional, smart folks, commercial companies offer

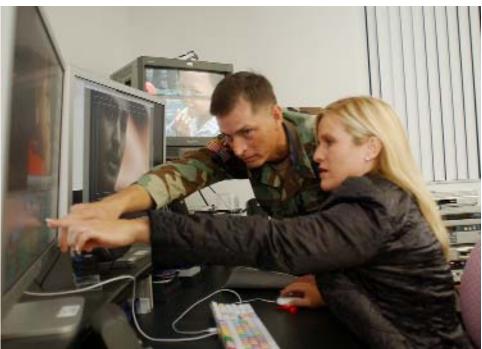state-of-the-art technology beyond our fiscal means.

We can't afford to overlook the creative talent resident in experienced commercial enterprise … their abilities enhance ours."

Treadwell also pointed out working with civilian firms has other benefits.

"Using civilian companies gives us the added advantage of having an additional view of what our mission goals are and ideas from another perspective on what is the best medium to use."

However the message is distributed, experience has proven products based in lies and falsehoods are ineffective.

"We are going to use the truth to get the message to the people," Treadwell said. "I've never approved a product that was meant to deceive."



**Sergeant 1st Class David Stopher, PSYOP specialist and Krista Knaus, audio visual production specialist, review their latest products. Photos by Tech Sgt. Jim Moser.**